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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 2013

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/68/456/Add.2)*]

68/159. Human rights and cultural diversity

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights[2] and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[2] as well as other pertinent human rights instruments,

Recalling also its resolutions 54/160 of 17 December 1999, 55/91 of 4 December 2000, 57/204 of 18 December 2002, 58/167 of 22 December 2003, 60/167 of 16 December 2005, 62/155 of 18 December 2007, 64/174 of 18 December 2009 and 66/154 of 19 December 2011, and recalling further its resolutions 54/113 of 10 December 1999, 55/23 of 13 November 2000 and 60/4 of 20 October 2005 concerning the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations,

Noting that numerous instruments within the United Nations system promote cultural diversity, as well as the conservation and development of culture, in particular the Declaration of the Principles of International Culture Cooperation proclaimed on 4 November 1966 by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its fourteenth session,[3]

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General,[4]

Recalling that, as stated in the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, contained in the annex to its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970, States have the duty to cooperate with one another, irrespective of the differences in their political, economic and social systems, in the various spheres of international relations, in the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, and in the

[1] Resolution 217 A (III).

[2] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[3] See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Fourteenth Session, Paris, 1966, Resolutions*.

[4] A/68/277.

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elimination of all forms of racial discrimination and all forms of religious intolerance,

Welcoming the adoption, by its resolution 56/6 of 9 November 2001, of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations,

Welcoming also the contribution of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban, South Africa, from 31 August to 8 September 2001, the Durban Review Conference, held in Geneva from 20 to 24 April 2009, and the high-level meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, held on 22 September 2011, to the promotion of respect for cultural diversity,

Welcoming further the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,[5] together with its Action Plan,[6] adopted on 2 November 2001 by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its thirty-first session, in which member States invited the United Nations system and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned to cooperate with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the promotion of the principles set forth in the Declaration and its Action Plan, with a view to enhancing the synergy of actions in favour of cultural diversity,

Recalling the Ministerial Meeting on Human Rights and Cultural Diversity of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Tehran on 3 and 4 September 2007,

Reaffirming that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and that the international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis, and that, while the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Expressing concern over the adverse impacts of lack of respect for and recognition of cultural diversity on human rights, justice, friendship and the fundamental right to development,

Recognizing that cultural diversity and the pursuit of cultural development by all peoples and nations are a source of mutual enrichment for the cultural life of humankind,

Recognizing also the contribution that diverse cultures have been making to the development and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Taking into account that a culture of peace actively fosters non-violence and respect for human rights and strengthens solidarity among peoples and nations and dialogue between cultures,

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[5] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Thirty-first Session, Paris, 15 October–3 November 2001*, vol. 1 and corrigendum, *Resolutions*, chap. V, resolution 25, annex I.

[6] Ibid., annex II.

Reaffirming that discriminatory treatment against different cultures and religions is detrimental to the principle of the equality of human beings,

Recognizing that all cultures and civilizations share a common set of universal values,

Recognizing also that the promotion of the rights of indigenous people and their cultures and traditions will contribute to the respect for and observance of cultural diversity among all peoples and nations,

Considering that tolerance of cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic diversities, as well as dialogue among and within civilizations, is essential for peace, understanding and friendship among individuals and people of different cultures and nations of the world, while manifestations of cultural prejudice, intolerance and xenophobia towards different cultures and religions generate hatred, violence and extremism among peoples and nations throughout the world,

Recognizing in each culture a dignity and value that deserve recognition, respect and preservation, and convinced that, in their rich variety and diversity, and in the reciprocal influences that they exert on one another, all cultures form part of the common heritage belonging to all humankind,

Convinced that the promotion of cultural pluralism and tolerance towards and dialogue among various cultures and civilizations would contribute to the efforts of all peoples and nations to enrich their cultures and traditions by engaging in a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and intellectual, moral and material achievements,

Acknowledging the diversity of the world, recognizing that all cultures and civilizations contribute to the enrichment of humankind, acknowledging the importance of respect and understanding for religious and cultural diversity throughout the world, and, in order to promote international peace and security, committing itself to advancing human welfare, freedom and progress everywhere, as well as to encouraging tolerance, respect, dialogue and cooperation among different cultures, civilizations and peoples,

1. *Affirms* the importance for all peoples and nations to hold, develop and preserve their cultural heritage and traditions in a national and international atmosphere of peace, tolerance and mutual respect;

2. *Emphasizes* the important contribution of culture to development and the achievement of national development objectives and internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

3. *Welcomes* the adoption on 8 September 2000 of the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[7] in which Member States consider, inter alia, that tolerance is one of the fundamental values essential to international relations in the twenty-first century and that it should include the active promotion of a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations, with human beings respecting one another in all their diversity of belief, culture and language, neither fearing nor repressing differences within and between societies but cherishing them as a precious asset of humanity;

[7] Resolution 55/2.

4. *Recognizes* the right of everyone to take part in cultural life and to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications;

5. *Affirms* that the international community should strive to respond to the challenges and opportunities posed by globalization in a manner that ensures respect for the cultural diversity of all;

6. *Expresses its determination* to prevent and mitigate cultural homogenization in the context of globalization, through increased intercultural exchange guided by the promotion and protection of cultural diversity;

7. *Affirms* that intercultural dialogue essentially enriches the common understanding of human rights and that the benefits to be derived from the encouragement and development of international contacts and cooperation in the cultural fields are important;

8. *Welcomes* the recognition at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance of the necessity of respecting and maximizing the benefits of diversity within and among all nations in working together to build a harmonious and productive future by putting into practice and promoting values and principles such as justice, equality and non-discrimination, democracy, fairness and friendship, tolerance and respect within and among communities and nations, in particular through public information and educational programmes to raise awareness and understanding of the benefits of cultural diversity, including programmes in which the public authorities work in partnership with international and non-governmental organizations and other sectors of civil society;

9. *Emphasizes* that dialogue among religions, cultures and civilizations on the basis of equal dignity should be enhanced, through supporting efforts made at the international level towards reducing confrontation, suppressing xenophobia and promoting respect for diversity, and in that regard also emphasizes that States should oppose all attempts at uniculturalism or the imposition of particular models of social or cultural systems and promote dialogue among civilizations, a culture of peace and interfaith dialogue, which will contribute towards peace, security and development;

10. *Welcomes* the activities of the Non-Aligned Movement Centre for Human Rights and Cultural Diversity in Tehran, and acknowledges the important role that the Centre plays in the promotion of the universality of all human rights as well as their realization;

11. *Recognizes* that respect for cultural diversity and the cultural rights of all enhances cultural pluralism, contributing to a wider exchange of knowledge and understanding of cultural background, advancing the application and enjoyment of universally accepted human rights throughout the world and fostering stable, friendly relations among peoples and nations worldwide;

12. *Emphasizes* that the promotion of cultural pluralism and tolerance at the national, regional and international levels is important for enhancing respect for cultural rights and cultural diversity;

13. *Also emphasizes* that tolerance and respect for diversity facilitate the universal promotion and protection of human rights, including gender equality and the enjoyment of all human rights by all, and underlines the fact that tolerance and respect for cultural diversity and the universal promotion and protection of human rights are mutually supportive;

14. *Urges* all actors on the international scene to build an international order based on inclusion, justice, equality and equity, human dignity, mutual understanding and promotion of and respect for cultural diversity and universal human rights, and to reject all doctrines of exclusion based on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

15. *Calls upon* States, relevant international organizations and non-governmental organizations to support and embark on intercultural initiatives on human rights in order to promote all human rights, thereby enriching their universality;

16. *Urges* States to ensure that their political and legal systems reflect the multicultural diversity within their societies and, where necessary, to improve democratic institutions so that they are more fully participatory and avoid marginalization and exclusion of, and discrimination against, specific sectors of society;

17. *Calls upon* States, international organizations and United Nations agencies, and invites civil society, including non-governmental organizations, to recognize and promote respect for cultural diversity for the purpose of advancing the objectives of peace, development and universally accepted human rights;

18. *Stresses* the necessity of freely using the media and new information and communications technologies to create the conditions for a renewed dialogue among cultures and civilizations;

19. *Requests* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to bear in mind fully the issues raised in the present resolution in the course of its activities for the promotion and protection of human rights;

20. *Also requests* the Office of the High Commissioner, and invites the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to support initiatives aimed at promoting intercultural dialogue on human rights;

21. *Urges* relevant international organizations to conduct studies on how respect for cultural diversity contributes to fostering international solidarity and cooperation among all nations;

22. *Requests* the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the implementation of the present resolution, including efforts undertaken at the national, regional and international levels regarding the recognition and importance of cultural diversity among all peoples and nations in the world and taking into account the views of Member States, relevant United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, and to submit the report to the General Assembly at its seventieth session;

23. *Decides* to continue consideration of the question at its seventieth session under the sub-item entitled "Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms".

70th plenary meeting
18 December 2013